

**Joint Legislative Public Budget Hearing
Workforce Development
February 3, 2016
Testimony on Behalf of Samantha Dahill, LPN**

Hello, my name is Samantha Dahill, I am currently an LPN in a skilled nursing facility in Houghton, NY. I started out 7 years ago as a Certified Nursing Assistant making minimum wage. I worked my way through LPN school with the help and support of my union training fund. Now, as a Licensed Practical Nurse I now make \$13.98 an hour.

I am 26 years old have two children who are 6 and 4 years old. I am the main bread winner for my family. Everyone in my household relies on Medicaid for our health insurance. If we didn't, we wouldn't be able to afford to go to the doctor. My family lives rent free in my parents' house, but that won't last forever. I would like to be able to better plan for my future, but there is no left over money for savings.

We have one vehicle. When I'm working my daughter can't make it to her reading lessons. There is no bus service where we live. I was in a car accident and totaled my vehicle and was unable to make it to work. I couldn't afford a new car without working and I couldn't get to work without a car. Every time one of my coworkers has to call off work, it doubles the workload on another nurse. We all know how hard that is and try not to call off at all, but sometimes it's impossible.

While working as a C.N.A. I was injured on the job and missed a good deal of time from work. That didn't stop me from pursuing a career in healthcare. I love my work. I graduated in the top of my class. I am very happy to do the best for my residents every day. This is the career I chose and want to continue in. I support an increase in minimum wage to \$15.00 an hour for everyone. Raising up the floor of our wages would help everyone who is a necessary part of our team taking care of our residents. We would be able to make it to work reliably and take care of ourselves and the ones we care about.